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Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Bulletin

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Changes to the King Mackerel Fishery in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Regions

KEY MESSAGE:

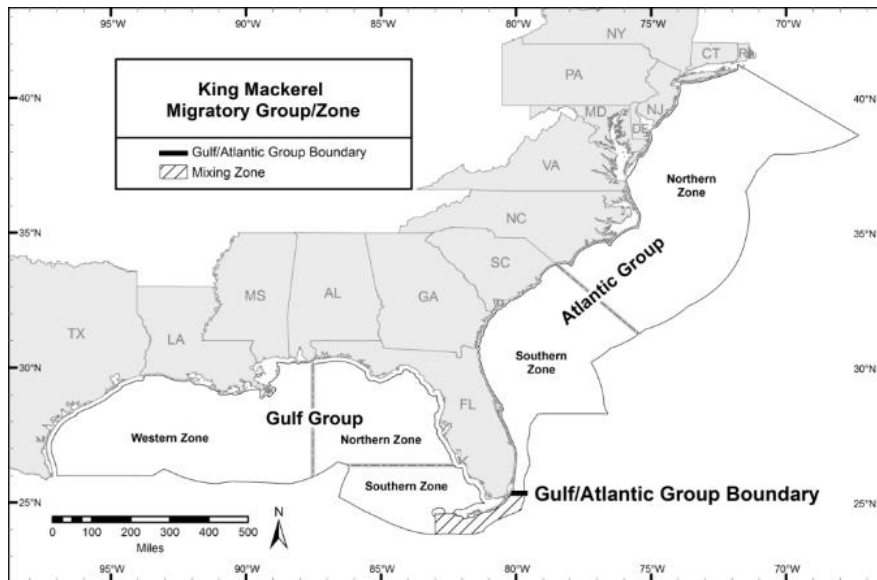
NOAA Fisheries announces a final rule implementing Amendment 26 to the Fishery Management Plan for Coastal Migratory Pelagics in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic regions (Amendment 26). Amendment 26 contains actions related to king mackerel in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Region following review of the most recent population assessment.

WHEN RULE WILL TAKE EFFECT:

- The rule will take effect on May 11, 2017.

WHAT THIS RULE DOES:

- Modifies the management boundary for the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic migratory groups of king mackerel to create a year-round boundary at the Miami-Dade/Monroe County line. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council will be responsible for management measures in the mixing zone, which includes federal waters off the Florida Keys.



- Revises reference points, the acceptable biological catch, annual catch limits, commercial quotas, and recreational annual catch targets for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel. These updated annual catch limits and quotas are included below in Table 1.1.
- Creates a limited incidental catch allowance for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel caught as bycatch in the shark gillnet fishery. This rule allows for the harvest and sale of three king mackerel per crew member per trip from the Northern Zone and two king mackerel per crew member per trip from the Southern Zone, caught incidentally on shark gillnet trips.
- Establishes a commercial split season for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone. This split season allocates 60% of the quota to Season One (March 1 - September 30) and 40% to Season Two (October 1 - the end of February).
- Establishes a commercial trip limit system for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel in the Atlantic Southern Zone. The commercial trip limit of 3,500 pounds remains in the area north of the Flagler/Volusia county line and remains in effect year-round when the fishery is open. South of the Flagler/Volusia county line, the trip limit is 50 fish from March 1 - March 31. After March 31, the trip limit increases to 75 fish for the remainder of Season One. For Season Two, the trip limit is 50 fish, except that beginning on February 1, if less than 70 % of the Season Two quota has been landed, the trip limit will be 75 fish.
- Increases the recreational bag limit for Gulf of Mexico migratory group king mackerel from two to three fish per person per day.
- Revises the annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas for Gulf of Mexico migratory group king mackerel. These updated annual catch limits and quotas are included below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. 2016/2017 Quotas for King Mackerel (pounds) in Amendment 26	
Commercial	pounds
Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group	
Western Zone	1,180,000
Northern Zone	531,000
Southern Zone (hook-and-line)	619,500
Southern Zone (gillnet)	619,500
Atlantic Migratory Group	
Northern Zone (includes gillnets north of Cape Lookout, NC)	1,497,600
Southern Zone (Total)	5,002,400
Southern Zone (Season One)	3,001,440
Southern Zone (Season Two)	2,000,960
<i>Recreational</i>	
Gulf of Mexico Migratory Group	6,260,000
Atlantic Migratory Group	10,900,000

Note: As of April 1, the Gulf of Mexico/South Atlantic boundary shifted to the Collier/Monroe County line, and Monroe County is currently part of the *Atlantic* Southern Zone. When Amendment 26 becomes effective, Monroe County will become part of the *Gulf of Mexico* Southern Zone year-round. The commercial zones in the Gulf of Mexico are currently closed for the 2016/2017 fishing season, but are expected to re-open when Amendment 26 becomes effective, with increased annual catch limits and commercial zone quotas.

FEDERAL REGISTER NAME/NUMBER: 82 FR 17387, published April 11, 2017

This bulletin serves as a Small Entity Compliance Guide, complying with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Where can I find more information on Amendment 26?

- Contact NOAA Fisheries, Southeast Regional Office

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- Amendment 26 may be found online at the NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office Web site at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_sa/cmp/2016/am%2026/index.html
- Additional information on management of king mackerel in the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic may be found at: http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable_fisheries/gulf_sa/cmp/index.html.

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